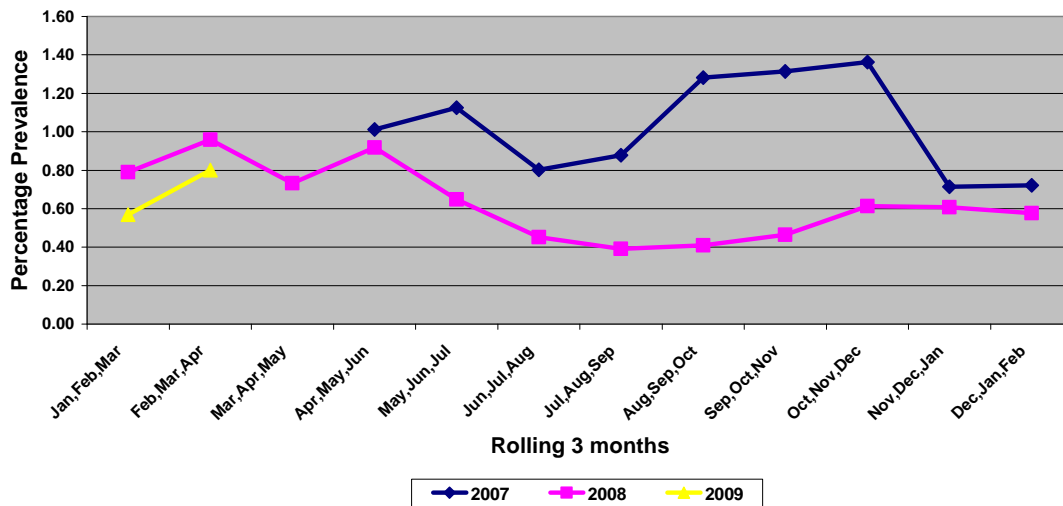


NADIS BPEX Commentary – June 2009

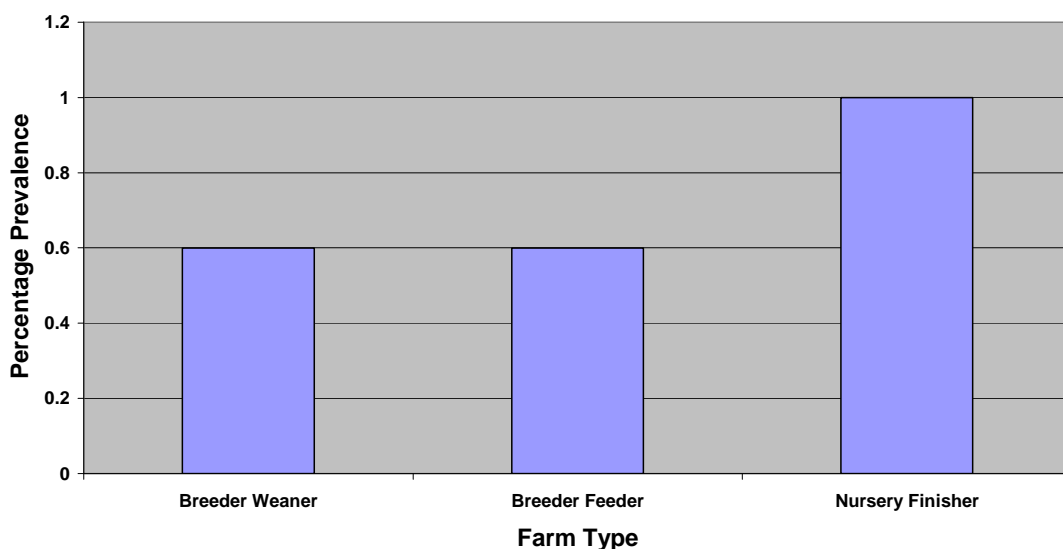
Scouring in pigs after weaning is a common feature of many pig herds and can generally be divided into two phases. The immediate post-weaning period (within 2 weeks) is most commonly associated with *E. coli* enteritis induced by the stresses of weaning, changes of diet and environmental shortcomings and hygiene. Beyond this period a less specific syndrome is seen which may involve e.g. *Lawsonia* (Ileitis), *Salmonella* and *E. coli*. However, in recent years Porcine Circovirus type 2 has been widely implicated in post-weaning enteritis and it would be reasonable to expect that the wide scale uptake of vaccination against this agent over the last year may have reduced the prevalence of scouring.

Graph 1 - Post Weaning Scour



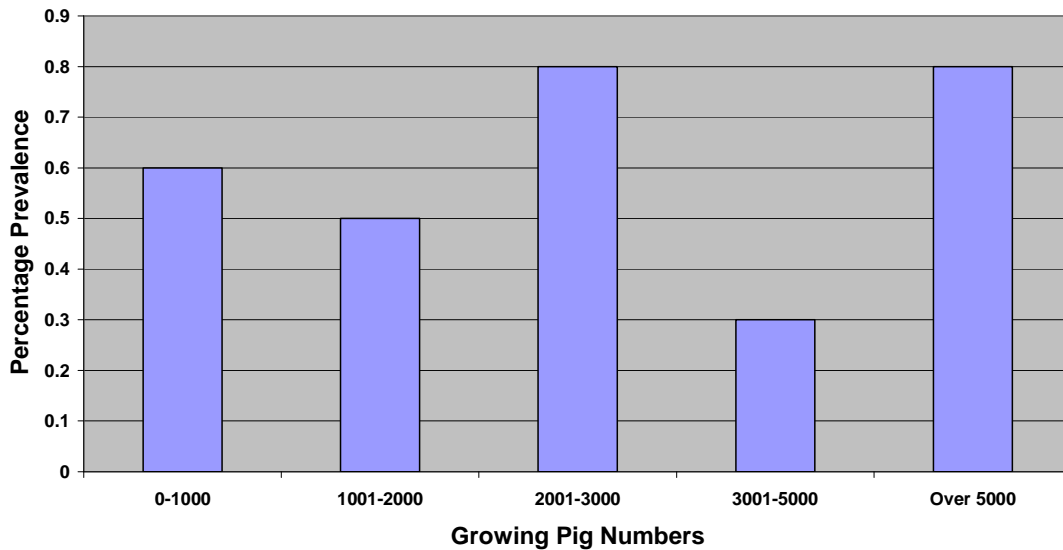
Graph 1 derived from NADIS reported on farm clinical data does indeed show such a trend with the prevalence of post weaning scour through the summer of 2008 less than half that seen in 2007. There has been a gentle rise in prevalence through the last winter with anecdotal reports suggesting that the cold weather, particularly in December and January, had a significant effect on weaned pigs in inducing scouring problems. It remains to be seen whether levels decline as the seasons progress.

Graph 2 - Post weaning scour - by Farm Type



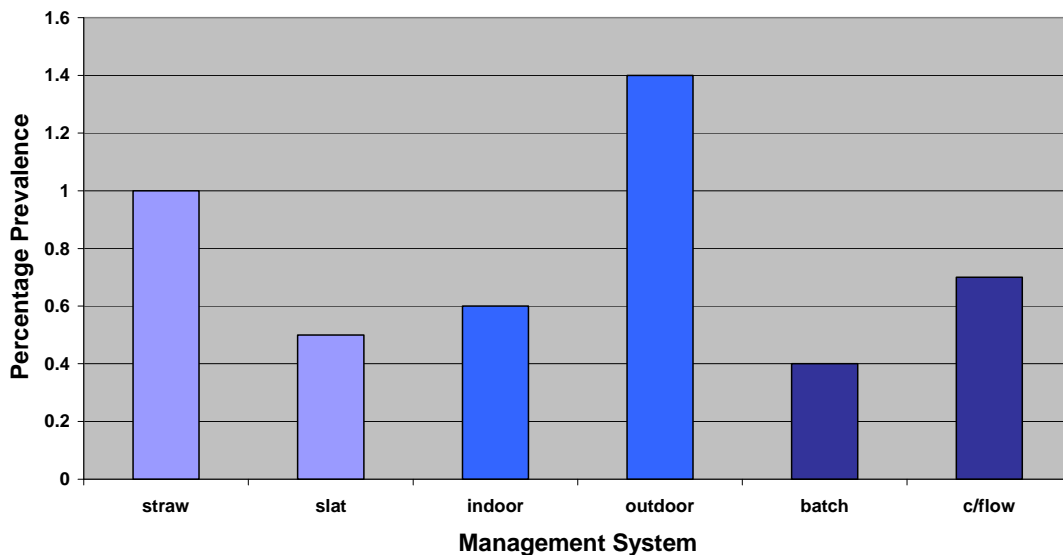
No particular patterns are evident in the prevalence of post weaning scour, with respect to farm type (graph 2) or by farm size (graph 3) although it is interesting to note a higher level of scour seen in nursery/finisher units onto which weaned pigs have been moved, compared to sites where pigs remain at weaning.

Graph 3 - Post weaning scour - by Pig Numbers



Far more noticeable differences are evident when looking at different management systems (graph 4). It is perhaps not surprising that given the importance of hygiene and the role that dung recycling plays in enteric disease that the prevalence of scour in straw based systems is double that reported on slats. The difference between indoor and outdoor produced pigs is even more noticeable and whilst the straw/slat dichotomy may confound these figures, the vulnerability of outdoor reared pigs – particularly those weaned into kennel systems within the field – to adverse weather may account for this difference.

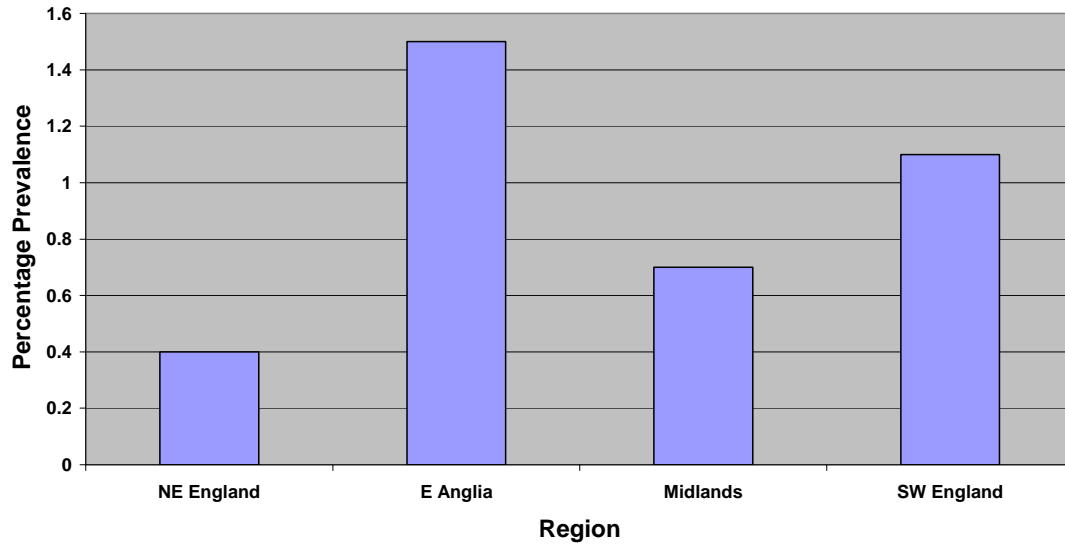
Graph 4 - Post weaning scour - Management System



The potential benefit of batch systems in improving hygiene and avoiding spread of disease between age groups is realised with respect to post weaning scour from the data collected.

Given the different pictures between indoor and outdoor and straw versus slat reared pigs, it is entirely consistent that a marked difference in prevalence of post weaning scour is recorded between the two principal pig keeping areas of North East England and East Anglia (graph 5) with the latter seeing nearly four times the level of scour compared to the more traditional 'intensive' systems in the North.

Graph 5 - Post weaning scour - by Region



As for some other disease conditions, the data suggests that levels of disease may be viewed as a counterbalance to perceived welfare benefits of straw based systems.

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